



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Gregory G. Lockhart  
Southern District of Ohio

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CONTACT: Fred Alverson  
614-469-5715

## **TWENTY-SEVEN INDICTED FOR HEROIN TRAFFICKING**

### ***“Operation Alley Way” nets suspects along Rt. 33 from Nelsonville to Marysville***

COLUMBUS - Teams of federal, state and local law enforcement agents today began arresting 27 people accused in two federal indictments of operating a heroin trafficking organization operating along U.S. Route 33 in central Ohio. The arrests are part of an investigation known as “Operation Alley Way”.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Robert L. Corso, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Columbus Police Chief James G. Jackson, Union County Sheriff Rocky Nelson, and other participating agencies in the investigative task force, announced the arrests today. The indictments charging the individuals were returned on May 6 and unsealed today.

“Union County Sheriff Rocky Nelson’s office began investigating a heroin case in Marysville in April 2007 at the same time that Columbus Police Department was investigating the same individual for heroin trafficking in Columbus,” Lockhart said. “Information sharing between local law enforcement agencies resulted in charges being brought against an alleged organization of drug traffickers instead of just the individuals involved.”

The DEA provided resources and support for various electronic and standard investigative techniques during the course of the investigation, which became known as Operation Alley Way.

The indictment alleges that Columbus resident Ronald Kelsor, along with Victor Woodson, Earnestine Bankstron, and Billy C. Lee operated the conspiracy out of a house in South Columbus. Kelsor obtained quantities of heroin from David J. McReynolds, Keith S. Hardy, Edmund W. Plunk and Mandell Cantrell. Woodson, Bankstron and Lee were considered distributors to users and re-sellers in Marysville, Nelsonville, and Columbus.

Twenty of the defendants are charged with conspiracy to distribute more than one kilogram of heroin, a crime which is punishable by a term of ten years up to life imprisonment. A

list of all defendants, their ages, cities of residence, the charges they face and potential penalties is attached.

**Kelsor et al**

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Lockhart commended the cooperative investigation by DEA agents, Columbus Police and Union County Sheriff's detectives, along with Assistant U.S. Attorneys Don Pashayan and Salvador A. Dominguez, who are prosecuting the case. Lockhart also said the investigation is continuing.

Lockhart also commended the U.S. Marshals Service for coordinating the arrests and court appearances, and for serving as a command post for today's operation.

Other agencies participating in the task force include the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Fairfield Hocking Major Crimes Unit, and the police departments in Westerville and Upper Arlington. The Ohio National Guard provided intelligence analysis in the investigation. The Athens County Sheriff's Office and the Athens Police Departments assisted with the arrests.

An indictment is merely an accusation. All defendants should be presumed innocent until and unless the government proves their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

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